



Welcome to Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative

CREATING THE GATEWAY TO THE EVERGLADES

Philip Bacon

Vice President for Neighborhood and
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LORI: Glades, Hendry and Palm Beach counties

Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative is sponsored by the SFWMD and is a convening of elected officials and other stakeholders around the southern shores of Lake O to re-imagine their economy in light of the potential that exists there!



Established a regional framework

- Bus route between Clewiston and Belle Glade
- Improve intersection of S.R. 80 and U.S. Hwy. 27
- Partnership between Florida Heartland Rural Economic Development Initiative (**FHREDI**) and Florida Rural Area Construction Coop (**FRACC**)
- Procured and distributed maps showing infrastructure, land and water resources, public facilities, tourism attractions and employment centers to regional leaders
- Developed tourism plan
- Developing data consortium

Economic diversification strategy

- **Phase 1:** Engender civic pride and regional cooperation — “Doable Deeds.”
- **Phase 2:** Build regional brand and supporting infrastructure. Add Data Consortium.
- **Phase 3:** Seek synergies in Alternative Energies/Agriculture/ Environmental Restoration.
- **Phase 4:** Leverage legislative strategies to the region’s concerns.

Moving forward

Short-term objectives:

- More business and civic outreach and participation
- Data “drill-down” and investment focus
- Address census undercount with LORI communities
- Refine and validate existing economic development studies

Medium-term objectives:

- Explore agriculture and its nexus to alternative energies
- Continue to explore synergies between agriculture, Everglades restoration and industry
- Attract desired and compatible goods and services to the region
- Link new initiatives to existing educational programs/institutes



Getaway to the Everglades launches regional revitalization around unique freshwater lake

By Phuong Nguyen Cotey of the Collins Center Staff

BELLE GLADE – For generations, the communities along the southern shores of Glades, Hendry and western Palm Beach counties have struggled despite a shared culture rich in natural landmarks and attractions.

Tuesday night, about 100 residents and community leaders gathered at the [Doby Hand Cultural Arts Center](#) to celebrate the unveiling of the Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative, a united marketing and branding effort established to attract tourists to the southern shores of Lake Okeechobee to help revive its communities.

The message: It is here, "[The Gateway to the Everglades](#)," where visitors can engage in a number of activities along the second largest freshwater lake in the nation.

The initiative, called LORI, is led by the Collins Center for Public Policy and the [South Florida Water Management District](#), two organizations that have pumped hundreds of thousands of dollars into the effort since it was launched more than a year and a half ago.

It has gained widespread support from local politicians, including mayors from four cities ([Belle Glade](#), [Clewiston](#), [Ft. Pierce](#), and [South Bay](#)).

"All of our hands are joined so that in the future ...they can look back and say, 'what a legacy they've left us by joining in a partnership to better the world,'" said Charles Dauray, a board member for the South Florida Water Management District.

There are several different projects under way to serve the area, which, despite their unique tourist offerings, still suffers from poverty and outdated infrastructure.

Unemployment around the lake is estimated to be as high as 40 percent, said [Philip Bacon](#), vice president for Neighborhood and Regional initiatives for the Collins Center. [READ MORE](#)

Join the community

Meetings & Events

Wednesday, January 12, 2011
Lake Okeechobee Community Reception

Location: Clewiston, Florida
Time: 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

[Export to Your Calendar](#) [Register](#)

Here you can find out about upcoming events and view photo galleries of past events. Some events may allow for online registration and the ticket purchase. Click the event name to view more details.

If you have information about an event or meeting that relates to a public policy initiative, you are encouraged to submit details that can be added to the Collins Center community or group calendars. Please complete and submit [this form](#).

Notice: Postings of dates and events on the Collins Center community and group calendars does not mean that the Collins Center endorses the event or meeting, its subject matter or the individual or group sponsor or host.

NEW!

Read or [download](#) the new Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative (LORI) brochure.



Introduction & Overview Financial Environment Profile

BACKGROUND
With generous support from Freddie Mac, Social Compact has created financial environment profiles for the purpose of disseminating information area demographics, access to financial services and consumer financial behavior, for any geography within the United States. The financial environment profiles merge public and proprietary databases (Synergos Technologies' PopStats and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data) and provide this information, aggregated from the census tract level, for select geographies upon request.

OVERVIEW

Geographies

The financial environment profiles provide indicator estimates for:

- low-to-moderate income (LMI) census tracts within a requested geography
- all census tracts in the city of the requested geography
- all census tracts in the county of the requested geography
- all census tracts in the state of the requested geography

For smaller geographies, county estimates are provided for comparison (i.e. for the City of Boston, Suffolk County estimates are provided); for larger geographies, state estimates are provided for comparison (i.e. for Suffolk County, State of Massachusetts estimates are provided).

Low-to-moderate income (LMI) households are identified based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition which considers low-to-moderate income as 50% (low) to 80% (moderate) of the median household income for the corresponding metropolitan statistical area (MSA). LMI geographies in this analysis are comprised of census tracts where at least 51% of households are considered low and moderate income earners.

[DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE REPORT](#)

Study Area Market Overview

[DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE REPORT](#)



Job and Occupation Data Sample

[DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE REPORT](#)



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A tale of two cities ...

MARKET SIZE	MARKET SIZE
Population: 367,426	Population: 504,226
Households: 137,577	Households: 179,471
MARKET BUYING POWER	MARKET BUYING POWER
Median Household Income: \$27,344	Median Household Income: \$31,990
Average Household Income: \$39,308	Average Household Income: \$50,637
Aggregate Income: \$5.4 Billion	Aggregate Income: \$9.1 Billion
	Income per Acre: \$386,074
	Aggregate Informal Economy: (9.3%)
	Income of New Home Buyers: \$114,972

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Source: Social Compact Miami DrillDown 2008/2009

LORI Tourism Launch

